Hunc saltem everso Juvenem succurrere Seclo,
Ne prohibete. — To Madam M. S.

WHoever considers the Contradictions and Hypocrisie of this Age, will think it his Duty to expose it to the Indignation of all that have Sense or Honesty.

Our present Disputes about Religion shall be the first Subject of this Discourse, a Subject, which whether it should in Tragedy or Comedy most, I am not able to determine.

With what violence are Opinions and Doctrines supported and oppos'd, and yet what Unity, what Peace, what Agreement in the Ruines of Debauchery, the Vices that have laid waste the Age.

How is the Eternal Religion become a quarrel and a pretence, a Sacrifice to Hypocrisie, and an Offering to Design! and the Beauty of our Natures, and the Guide of our Beings, and the Glory of our Reason, expos'd to the Discourses and Contempt, to the Villany and Folly of the worst of Men.

The present Pretences of the Dissenters, are such an Attempt upon our Experience and Memory, that nothing but an utter detestation of all Modesty, and an Association for the Defence and Propagation of Impudence and Impiety, could set them upon another Undertaking of this kind; and if they prevail by our consent, it must be reckon'd no lesser than a Judgment of Delusion, a renouncing the first Principle of Preservation, which is concern'd in our Senses as well as in our Lives.

These honest Greeks are bringing their Wooden Horse a second time before our Walls, for what can be more wooden and brutish, than to be imposed into a belief of the sincerity and good meaning of our most subtle and cruel Enemies? This second Horse can impose on nothing but an Ass.

Let the whole World judge, whether this Generation of Men, who when their Principles were governing, and envenom'd with Power, acted such Villanies as the Pagans are yet to learn, and that drew the best Copy of the Jews Original, and who approv'd in cold Blood, what they did in hot, be fit to reform our Church of *England*, I mean the Dissenters from it and Humanity. I allow them fit Men to Reform our Lives and Fortunes, but not to mend our Religion or Manners, which I wish were done by a good hand directed by the hand of God.

'Tis not my Design to write the History of the late Times, or to Satyr those Men that have set themselves beyond the reach of Charity, and expos'd themselves to the severest Histories, my Design is to prevent our being abus'd by them any more, a Prudence we are oblig'd to, as well as to the Charity of forgiving what is past, and we will keep what is past in our Memory, not for their Evil, but for our own Good.

They must have a very mean Opinion of our Judgment, and Care of our selves, to make this present Attempt upon our Religion, under the pretence of making it Holier.

That Men that have digested such vast Impieties, that compos'd a new body of Wickedness, that those Religions (for such they will be call'd) that gave the

Reign

Reign to Murder and Rabble Tyranny, to confusion and slaughter, should pretend our Church of *England* is not Holy enough to receive them, is enough to enrage the Charity of the meekest Christian, and to Arm the Reason and Passion of all the sensible World, against such impudent Wickedness, and unveil'd Hypocrisie.

In the very act of crying out against Idolatry, at what a rate did they commit Sacriledge, and many of them that broke down the Carv'd Work of our Churches with Axes and Hammers, are now pretending to beautifie them.

But we have not so learnt the use of our Senses, as to believe such Men as these; if what they have even now done in *Scotland*, be not sufficient to warn *England*, then nothing is.

If the zeal of these men be so excessive as they pretend, let them give it a vent in Charity and good Works, in Reforming their own Consciences and Religions; in Modesty and Obedience: let them pull out the Beams, and throw up the Camels they have swallow'd, and when they have done this, let them pull the Motes out of our Eyes, and the Gnats out of our Stomachs.

I am not fond of this Theme, I don't want Charity for their Persons, but to bestow it on their lewd Designs, and their Abstract Wickedness, would be a great abuse of the best thing in the world.

If they are at this minute raking amongst our Holy Things, to find wherewithall to object and upbraid us, they cannot easily take it ill, if we remonstrate to them their Gyant Wickednesses, and first rate Sins, especially when provok'd by such loathsom and Atheistical Hypocrisie.

Let them go on in their Attempts, and we will go on in our Guard and Caution against such men, we will hold fast our Prudence and Integrity, as long as they shall their profligate Hypocrisie, and bold Attempts.

The Gentleman that writ the late *Secret History* of King *Charles*, and King *James* the Second, charges the first of the Royal Seconds, with dissembling particularly with the Dissenters; let the Objection perish with the History, and may the man that writ it, live to recover his Modesty and Reason.

Quanto Rectius ille, how much more like a Gentleman, and a man of Sense and Morality and Breeding, does the Author of the new Observator vail the Nakedness of that Prince, who was once the Father of this *Ham*, who has expos'd him as if he had Ravisht his Mother, and begot the Secret Historian, without his or his Mothers Consent, in the same mad fury that he begot his History or long Prosy Ballad of King *Charles* and King *James*.

Had he charg'd the Dissenters with the grossest dissembling with the first and second *Charles*, no man could ever have contradicted him, but 'twas not his business so much to speak Truth, as to lay the durt thick. I dare appeal to the Author of this Historical Lampoon, whether he has not receiv'd large Correction from his own mind, for what he has writ.

But it will never lye in this mans Power to give a tollerable figure to the Dissenters, and however he may blacken King's, he can never whiten them, tho' one was his aim as much as t'other.

Nor is it my Design to charge the Dissenters alone with the folly and bold pretences of the present time. Religion seems on every hand to be dealt with far otherwise than it ought; for on all hands the Temporal Interests that attend her, are watcht and secur'd with the utmost Diligence: No Policy, no Address omitted to secure its Constitutions, because they secure its Revenue; but for its Manners, for the severities of life it enjoyns, how little are all

Parites

Parties concern'd! are not we over-run with Ruin and Debauchery? Is not the *English* Name and Character eſac'd with Vice and Folly? Is not even the Civil Virtue and Genius of the Nation extinct with the Infamy of a general Wickedneſs? Allegiance, Divine and Humane, Humility and Love, Modeſty and Chaſtity, Charity and Devotion, are eſteem'd Arbitrary and Indifferent things, to be practis'd or omitted as we think fit. And where is the Zeal? Where are the efforts for the Recovering theſe cancell'd Duties? But to Aboliſh or preſerve a Ceremony or Notion, What Zeal! What Contention! What Parties! What Animoſities! If their meaning were honeſt, 'tis certain they would be employ'd in other Buſineſs, they would promote a Union in the practice of Religion, in the performing thoſe Duties in which all Parties are agreed; the Eternal rewards of another life, would charm us beyond the Intereſt of this, and we ſhould take more care to go well out of the World, than to live well in't. If this zeal pretended by all Parties were Heavenly and Real, the Everlaſting Glories of the upper World, the Beauty of God, the Charms of Vertue, would heat and provoke us to take other Meaſures for our Eternity, to build other Lives, and draw another Scheme of Manners and Practice. Inſtead of contending for the demoliſhing or ſupport of a Ceremony, we would receive the Stranger as the Brother of our Nature, and cheriſh him as our own Fleſh, and cover his wants with Joy; we would draw out our Souls to the Miſerable, and be in pain till we had reliev'd him; the Charity of Angels would inflame our Breaſts, and we ſhould burn with love to our Brothers we ſhould be in pain till the Captive were Redeem'd, till the Oppreſſed were Reliev'd, and the Miſerable at Eaſe; theſe things would teſtifie our Religion, they would witneſs and demonſtrate our ſincerity, for theſe Fruits ſeldom proceed but from an honeſt and good Heart.

Our Religion would then put on its Primitive Glory, and ſhine radiant in its Antient Flames, Heathens would again behold us with wonder, and become Proſelytes to the conviction and demonſtration of our Practice, the Sun would behold us with a kinder ſtrength, and maintain a more fruitful correſpondence with this neither world, the Seaſons would again obſerve their diſorder'd courſes, and all Nature would recover a new Strength and Vigour, the Land would yield its Strength, and the Earth would bring forth its Encreaſe, *and God even our own God would give us his Bleſſing*.

The Triumphs of Martyrdom, and the Glories of Confeſſion, (if occaſion were,) would again revive, and the whole Earth would become a Holy Land, as far as theſe practices were diffus'd: the Angels would deſcend with joy, and return with Triumphs, and the boaſted Ages deceas'd, would no longer upbraid the Folly and Miſery of the preſent.

And till this be attempted, in vain do we talk of Religion, in vain expect the wondrous Bleſſings that attend it. If the intereſts of ſincere and effectual Religion were not ſo far Superior to thoſe of a falſe pretended one, if this World could court us, and make ſuch propoſals as the other does, if its Meaning and Rewards were Eternal, if it could ſatiate the Infinite Deſires of a Soul, that are as unmeaſurable as Eternity it ſelf, we might with ſome pretence quit the offers and purſuits of the upper world.

But when of the one hand there is nothing offered but Deluſion and Sorrow, and to the greateſt Men, and thoſe that have made moſt of this World, nay even thoſe Deluſions, if there be any comfort or ſupport in 'em, will not laſt long, tho' the ſorrows will; if we are entertain'd with falſe propoſitions and real cheats, with Arguments unworthy of Children, or the ſtupidity of Beaſts, if

we

we are oppreſt with the Experience and warning of ſo many Ages paſt, the Judgment of all Religions and Philoſophy, that have pretended to any Reaſon or Sobriety, if every one goes Arm'd with the Syllogiſms of his own Experience, and moſt, with the Demonſtrations of Miſery and Ruine, why are we any longer baffled with the lean pretences of Vice and the World, why are we again repeating the ruinous Experiment, and practiſing on our own Deſtruction.

Let us behold Virtue and the upper World, Religion and Glory, with other Eyes than hither to we have done, let peace of Mind charm, let the Miniſtry and Attendance of Angels, warm our Ambition, let Palaces, and Crowns, and an Eternal Empire and Kingdom provoke our Glory, let us chafe our Minds with Everlaſting expectations, and enrage 'em at the darkneſs, and diſappointments, and deformity of Vice and this lower World.

And while Kings are preparing to meet like the *Northern* Winds, ſtriving who ſhall have the largeſt Care, and the heavieſt Crown, and the greateſt weight of fall, let all that are Wiſe expend a better Intereſt, and purſue a truer Glory; let them extend the Empire of Vertue, over all the Follies of Vice, and then celebrate the Triumphs of a real Conqueſt of the World.

Thus employ'd, our zeal will have firm effects, and produce Fruits worthy of its warmths, and becoming its true Nature, we ſhall act like men Baptiz'd to the Philoſophy of Chriſt, and train'd up to another World, we ſhall aſſert the Glory of our Nature, and the Divinity of our Souls, Angels will aſſiſt us with Joy, and the reſult of our Labour, would be Peace, and Joy, and Tranſport, even in this Life, and a fermented and unruly Happineſs, in expectation of the Joys of Eternity, for the other World would often break in upon us even before Death, our Peace would be as the River, and our Righteouſneſs as the Waves of the Sea, and the Glory of the Lord would be our Rereward.

But if the Vigour and Spirits of our Zeal and Religion, be exhauſted in circumſtantials, and leſſer Matters, (to which I allow their juſt weight and decent Importance, as our Saviour did to the Tyth of Mint) and that what we have done in defending them, ought not to have been left undone, yet if our Religion dwells there, and flames out in nothing elſe, it gives Argument of the greateſt ſuſpition that our Deſign is none of the beſt, and our Religion none of the ſincereſt, for that would carry us to farther and weightier inſtances of our Piety, that would carry the face of another World in them, and an Immortal Deſign.

If we pretend to a Zeal that's worthy our Profeſſion, let's ſet on other Lives, let Purity and Chaſtity, let Heavenly Mindedneſs, and contempt of the World, Triumph in our Manners, and let Vice be the Object of our Rage and Scorn, till then all our Impertinent or Knaviſh warmths for or againſt a Form, or an Eſtabliſhment, or a Ceremony, will ſignifie nothing but to manifeſt that we are not in earneſt with our Religion, and that there is nothing ſincere but our Hypocriſie.

If we have any value for the Happineſs of the World, if we think it worth the while to retrieve the Honours of the Humane Nature, and to ſtop the Inundations of Ruine and Shame, and the diſſolution of Manners and Society, and the total extinction of our Reaſon and Happineſs, let us remember whereunto we were Baptiz'd, let the Solemnities of thoſe Sacraments we have paſt, and the Religion of our Vows, ſet us upon other Manners, and give us other Deſigns, and better Lives. It's no mean Enterpriſe (with the aſſiſtance of God's Spirit) to retrieve a dying World, and reſtore the Humane Nature in its laſt Agony and Convulſion of Ruine and Shame. All that concur to this work will be greater employ'd than the wild *Macedonian*, or the firſt *Cæſar*, who labour'd to deſtroy the Fabrick of the World, and gave Mankind to the Sword, and Peace and Order, to their Rage and Folly, that our Hiſtories might be full of their Fury and Miſchiefs, and Poſterity be troubled with their Names and Follies.

But the Progreſſes we make in Virtue, and the Advantages we procure it in the World, are labours worthy our Inſtitution, and becoming our Baptiſm, and the Sacraments of the New Teſtament. Here we ſhew the Genius of our Maſter, who train'd us up to another World, and bid us purſue Immortal Rewards, and an Eternal Heaven, he has trod the rough and glorious Path before us, he himſelf engag'd all the difficulties he has propos'd to us, and ſhewd us how to practice, and taught us how to live, and how to dye, and how to live for ever.

Thus we ſhall Triumph over the World, and our ſelves, and Folly, and Miſery, and ſhall live in the Joy of Angels, and the Wiſdom of Men, and the Comforts of the Holy Ghoſt.

FINIS.